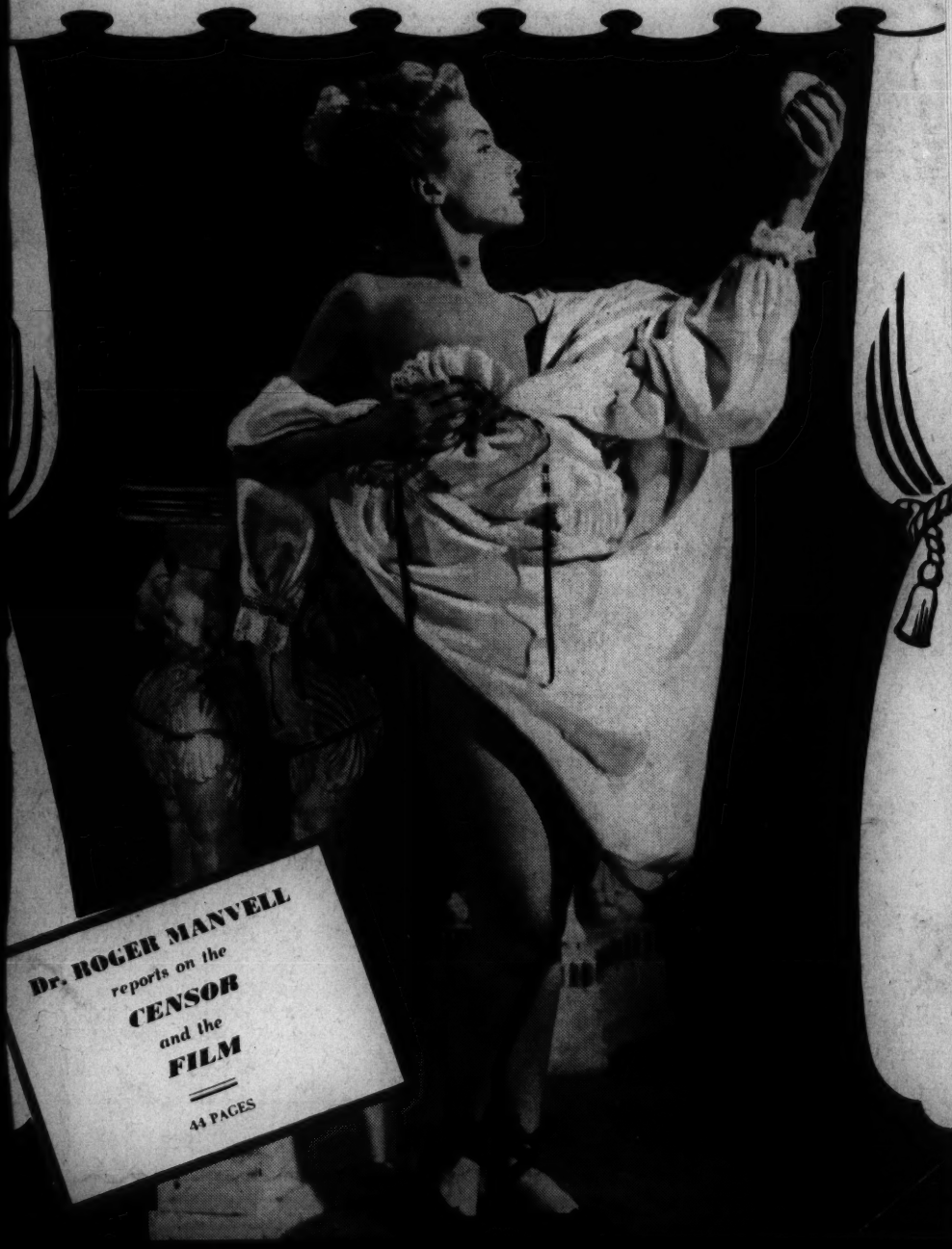
Film Monthly Review

Vol. 7 No. 7 JULY, 1949 PRICE NINEPENCE



THE ACADEMY CINEMA

Presents

Two Dore Schary Films

THEY LIVE BY NIGHT

with

Cathy O'Donnell and

Farley Granger

and

THE WINDOW

with

Bobby Driscoll

Film Monthly Review

JULY, 1949 Vol. 7, No. 7

EDITORIAL

AS Chairman of the British Film Academy, Sir Michael Balcon this year presented the statuettes to the Award winners. He proudly claimed that a country which, within a few months, could produce films like *Hamlet, The Fallen Idol, The Red Shoes* (Award winners); *The Winslow Boy, Scott of the Antarctic* and *The Small Back Room,* has indeed a film industry that is very much alive.

Now our main objection to this statement is the inclusion of Sir Michael Balcon's own film, *Scott of the Antarctic.* Granted that this was a sincere and painstaking attempt to present pictorially the life of one of our national heroes. But far more than honesty of intention is required in order to produce a picture of continuous human appeal. And we maintain that our original opinion of this film still holds good—frankly, it was one big bore.

However, Sir Michael has since more than redeemed himself; *Passport to Pimlico, Whisky Galore*! and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* are the result of Ealing Studios' high integrity, *plus* the imagination of talented story-tellers. Hence, three very successful films.

Elsewhere Within

The Censor and the Film *by Roger Manvell* 4
Should Battle Commence? *by R. E. Whitehall* 7
The Function of a Story Department *by Renée Lazarus* 10
We Should See These Films *by Frances Mullin Clark* ... 12
Question for Parents *by Paul Nugat* 16
Strictly Pictorial 19
The Element of Time *by J. W. Booth* 28
A Dictionary of Film Clichés *by Eric Goldschmidt* ... 33
Report on the N.F.A. Film School 36
News from the Studios *by Alan Curl* 37
Digging up the Past *by Rachael Whear* 40
Film Production in China *by T. Y. Lo* 41
Film Reviews 43

COVER STILL: Margot Holden as she appears in the Grand National Picture, *Murder at the Windmill.*

Edited by Robert Hirst

All communications to:—Precinct Publications, 50, Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7. (FREmantle 7120.)

A report on the British Film Academy Discussion

THE CENSOR and THE FILM

by ROGER MANVELL

Director of the British Film Academy

UNDER the chairmanship of Sidney Bernstein, the British Film Academy recently organised a meeting at which the Secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, Mr. A. T. L. Watkins, was invited to discuss film censorship in Britain with Frank Launder, representing the British film makers.

Launder—and Social Topics

Frank Launder opened the discussion by saying that he greatly preferred a Trade to a Government system of censorship, since the latter might be subject to political prejudice; but he felt, however, that any censorship system put a restraint on the freedom of the film maker. He could not feel free to launch into serious social topics because the Censor was certain to frown on them. He thought censorship should always be based on the intention of a picture; and if the intention was a bad one, the film should be banned altogether however much it steered clear of Code difficulties. Censorship by its very nature has to play safe: what is needed is a daring Censor prepared to encourage what is liberal and broadminded.

The Censor—and Art

Mr. Watkins then defended the position of the screen Censor. There would be no need of a Censor, he said, if film audiences were made up exclusively of mature and responsible adults. Censorship is necessary in view of the heterogeneous nature of film audiences; the youthful and unstable element inevitably to be found in these audiences must be protected from the harmful influences which would inevitably appear if there were no censorship at all. The Censor was often attacked because he did not attempt to raise the artistic standard of films. This was not his job, said Mr. Watkins; it would be unwarrantable for him to become an artistic adviser to the film companies. On the one hand, he must not be subjected to the extreme demands of the prudes; no censor could satisfy the prudes and survive. On the other hand, the Board certainly does, and always should, pay attention to the views of responsible public bodies concerned with the effect of the cinema on the community. There are three main principles behind our form of censorship, which works elastically without any need for a written Code. These principles are, first: is the film likely to impair the moral standards of the typical cinema audience; second: is the film likely to give offence to any reasonable-minded section of the public; and third: is the film suitable to be shown to an audience



Dr. Manvell (right) with Henry Moore, the distinguished sculptor, who designed the Academy statuette. (Keystone.)

which in all probability will contain children.

New Adult Category

Among the speakers from the floor was Mr. Will Barker, the pioneer British film producer. He recalled how necessary it had been in 1912 to set up a form of censorship to clear the industry of the pornographic subjects certain producers, both British and foreign, were introducing into the market.

Other speakers included John Maddison, Harry Watt, and

Wolfgang Wilhelm. Among the suggestions put forward by various speakers was one for an extra Certificate to be given for a totally adult category of films which no children would be permitted to see. Such a category would allow for the more specialised kind of cinemas to show, without omissions, films of a high artistic integrity made on the Continent about subjects which at present could not be allowed exhibition because of the possible presence of children in the audience.



Producer-Director-Screenwriter Frank Launder is seen here directing a difficult scene. Since forming partnership with Sidney Gilliat (Individual Pictures), he has made many good-quality films. He is also the President of the Screenwriters' Association.

Should Battle Commence?

by R. E. WHITEHALL

Should the cinema magnates fight television? Or should they give this new medium their full co-operation?

THE news that the General Council of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association has recommended members to ban two Western films—*Wrangler's Roost* and *Trailing Double Trouble*—is symptomatic of the hysteria which hits film exhibitors in this country whenever television comes up as a topic for discussion.

Short-sighted Policy

Here are two films which have been seen by the small minority of British cinema-goers who may own a television set; and they are hardly the type of people who would see, or have an opportunity of seeing, the programme-Western, so that the question of unfair competition hardly arises. And as a result, the cinema-goers outside the range of Alexandra Palace are to be debarred from seeing these films; the film exhibitor is so terrified of the competition from television that he intends to combat it to the greatest of his ability. Yet this policy is as short-sighted as the feud between newspapers and sound broadcasting in the early days of radio.

For television, whatever the obstacles placed in its way, is going to be a permanent feature of our daily life; and the sooner an amicable settlement can be made between films and television, the better for all concerned. This move on the part of the C.E.A. may, as the newspapers report, be the most serious blow television has had; but it would be foolish to imagine that a policy of non-co-operation is going to halt the progress of British television.

Lesson from U.S.A.

The policy of banning films from television screens has already been tried in America without success; in return for Marshall Aid, we are sending them all our old films, cheap and nasty. But the demand for new films has brought forth the supply. Films produced especially for television are being made in Hollywood by such reputable producers as Hal Roach, Irving Rapper, Jerry Fairbanks, and William Cameron Menzies. Produced on budgets of anything up to £1,000, they are pre-planned to such an extent that shooting usually extends over a period of two days; but the producers' desire to develop their market has interested them in British television.

Whether films made especially for television will ever become a feature of the British film scene it is too early to say. Although the first experiment has already been made, the conditions in America—widely scattered and

competing stations, commercial advertising—are so different from those operating in British television. But the space shortage at Alexandra Palace makes the use of films a necessary adjunct to the studio productions.

Advertising Matter

In America, too, the battle is being carried the other way. Plans have already reached an advanced stage, whereby cinemas will carry the top-ranking television shows instead of the usual second feature. Some of the leading advertising agencies in the States have offered their television shows to exhibitors, with the reception of the proposal surprising the agencies by the interest shown. The principal drawback at the moment is the advertising content of the shows, exhibitors being dubious about carrying sponsored television programmes designed to sell branded goods; but the agencies are now considering ways of eliminating this obstacle, and are trying to work out a system whereby the commercial part of a programme is not shown on the cinema screen in the blatant way it occupies the television screen. Whether these obstacles will be too great to surmount is not yet clear, but the fact that television and theatre interests have actively discussed it is a red light to those in this country who would completely divorce the two media.

Closer Co-operation

The degree of co-operation between film and television personnel, too, could be closer than it is at present. The leading writers, producers and directors in Hollywood (and even the stars when not tied by contract) have shown a keen awareness of the potentialities of television, and a willingness to work for reduced salaries in return for the freedom to experiment in the new medium; and that astute showman, Samuel Goldwyn, in the course of a long article in a New York newspaper, welcomed the appearance of television and the better films it should provoke. Hollywood realises that television will hurt some types of films—the bad ones—but that old saying of the film industry, exhibitors and all, that "there's nothing wrong with business a good picture can't cure," will be as true when television is in every home as it is to-day.

Taking the Initiative

There are signs, though, that the interchange between film and television technicians and artists is spreading to this country. Alexandra Palace released Royston Morley to make a film in Austria, and the big film-producing unit at Elstree, Associated British, has shown great interest in the work of such television producers as George More O'Ferrall. These men, with their ingenuity and fresh ideas, have much to offer to the film, but television can also gain if it borrows the experienced film workers.

One of the most significant of recent trends in television is the association of George More O'Ferrall and Basil Dean. The former, of course, achieved great success with his productions of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," while the latter is one of London's most important theatrical producers, and was for many years a producer-director for Associated Talking Pictures at Ealing. In Sir James Barrie's "The Will" (starring Michael Denison, Dulcie Gray and Jack Hawkins), George More O'Ferrall was in charge of the television-producers' gallery, while Basil Dean directed the

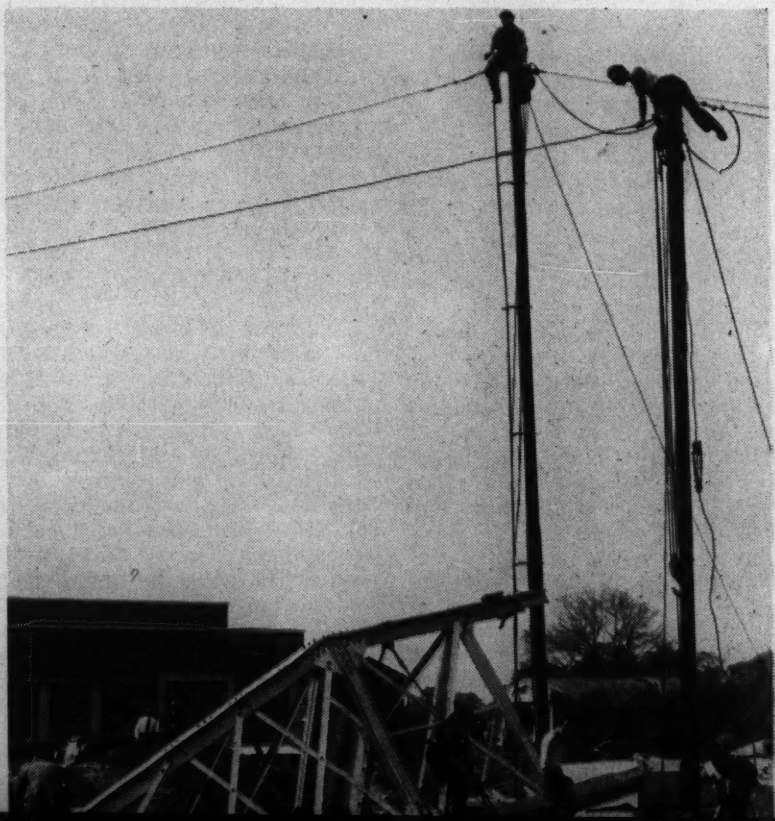
players on the studio floor. This venture, followed by an ambitious production of James Elroy Flecker's poetic drama, "Hassan" (produced before the war with Greer Garson), may herald the shape of things to come.

The Way Ahead

The B.B.C. are, apparently, desirous of attracting stage directors to do individual shows, along the lines of Jack Hulbert's productions of "Cinderella" and "Under the Counter"; and here, of course, is where the film people can be of use, for the cinema is infinitely closer to television in its technique than is the theatre.

If films and television can get together and try to work out their disagreements sensibly, then the effort should be of benefit to both. Results of box-office surveys in the United States suggest that the exhibitors' opposition in this country is based on ill-founded assumptions—in America it has been established that the box-office slump is no greater in the areas reached by television than in those as yet untouched. The cinema has a tremendous field in which to work, on subjects which are more suited to the cinema-theatre than to the intimacy of television, but if film people imagine that by turning their backs on this upstart they will put themselves in a position to ignore him, then they are deluding themselves with some rather idle fancies.

Television marches on. Workmen hoisting the first section of the television mast at Sutton Coldfield, the Midlands' station. (By courtesy of "The Birmingham Mail.")



The Function of A STORY DEPARTMENT

by RENEE LAZARUS

Renee Lazarus started - and ran - the Story Department at Rank's Highbury Studios. She is now Assistant London Story Editor for Warner Brothers

STORY Departments, whether large or small, have but one aim—to find potential screen material. This may come from various sources.

From Agents

First, from the agents. Most Story Editors make it a rule that they will not accept manuscripts unless submitted through an accredited literary agent. Without this ruling, Story Departments are likely to become inundated with unsolicited scripts and "ideas." I remember once receiving a letter from a woman who had had some vivid dreams and had written down some of them as plots for future films! The agents act as a sort of protection against these odd suggestions, and—being acquainted with the type of subjects required by the various film companies—only send material which they really think might have film potentialities.

. . . and Publishers

Then, the publishers. A keen interest is usually taken in the classified catalogues which are issued periodically by most of the big publishers, and Story Editors will pay particular attention to the sections devoted to the type of subjects for which their Studios are looking; for example, "Crime," "Biography" or "Fiction." From the short blurbs given on each subject, they have to decide which books their department should cover.

Whereas the agents will send to Story Departments material which they think will be suitable for the screen, it is very rarely that publishers will submit advance copies of their new novels without a personal request.

The Play-Script Puzzle

Notices of new stage productions are also watched with interest by the Story Editors, who must decide which plays appear to be worth viewing. It is almost impossible to obtain the actual script of a play before a production is staged; and even after the play has been launched in a West End theatre, Story Editors never cease to be puzzled, and often aggravated, when informed by the theatrical agents that not a single script can be found. Only recently I tried to obtain a copy of the script of a play which had

been running successfully in London for several months; I learnt from the author's agent that complete production copies were not yet available!

There is an additional source of potential film material in a quite different category. The public interest which is frequently aroused by the revival of successful eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plays and novels, gives Story Editors the opportunity of looking into the works of authors who, by their ability to conjure up vivid pictures by "word-painting," seem to have written their books with one eye on the film screens of the future. For example, there have recently been three British films based on Charles Dickens' novels.

Knowledge of Film Production Essential

Having obtained material from one of the above-mentioned sources, the next stage is to have a report made on each subject.

Most Story Departments have either permanent or outside readers on their staff who prepare a synopsis of each story and comment on its suitability (or otherwise) for the screen. Most Story Editors find it necessary to edit their readers' comments, for, whereas the reader may be able to write an excellent synopsis of a story, he may not have sufficient knowledge of film production to be able to comment fully on the screen potentialities of the subject.

A good general knowledge of film production is, in many ways, essential for Story Editors, for they must have a clear idea of how the subjects which they recommend can be adapted and transferred to the screen.

They must be able to look at a story through the eyes of a film director. A well-written book, praised for its literary merit, does not necessarily contain an idea for a film; whereas a badly-written book, full of clichés and unspeakable dialogue, may contain an original twist which makes it worth considering for adaptation.

After Producer Interested . . .

After finding a promising story comes what is probably the most difficult part of the procedure—that is, trying to get a producer interested in it!

If the company does decide to purchase the rights in a recommended subject, the terms are fixed and it is usually left to the Story Editor to acquaint the legal department with the information required for the drawing up of the contract.

A writer is chosen to work on the adaptation (possibly in collaboration with the original author) and further contracts have to be drawn up and signed. Script conferences follow, and where Story Editors are actually working at the Studios, or in close collaboration with the producer, they will probably take part in commenting and advising on the script.

The duties of a Story Editor naturally vary according to the size and scope of the production company for which he works; but as long as stories are being written and films are being made, production companies will always need a Story Department to cope with the material which is constantly being submitted to them, and a Story Editor who understands the requirements and policy of his companies' producers and who will be constantly on the look-out for new and original film material.

Brilliant direction, photography and acting are not enough to make a film good box office. The average film audience wants to see a picture with a good story, which will hold its interest until the final scene.

We should see THESE films...

by FRANCES MULLIN CLARK

Are British film-goers really so apathetic towards fine Continental films? Are they quite satisfied with the "treacly sentiment poured out from Hollywood and Denham"?

"BUT we only see the best of foreign films," complain members of the public in negative championship of our native product. Even if we were lucky enough to see a wider cross-section, whether we like to admit it or not, the proportion of good films from the Continent is far higher than from this country. We have our moments even today, and from time to time can still make a fine film; but we should be relieved to hear that pictures made in our plentiful off-moments are spared the humiliation of foreign distribution. Film audiences abroad can equally complain that seeing only our best it is impossible to judge us fairly.

The now extinct 75 per cent. film tax, and its son and heir, the 45 per cent. quota—aimed to save dollars and our own industry—leaves us bogged up with re-issues. Namely, old films sacrilegiously dragged out from their last resting places, dusted and offered cheaply as conforming to the quota demands. Many old French films, too, have been resurrected and are now showing on British screens. Not all British re-issues are best forgotten, whilst it is a privilege to see again such old French masterpieces as *Un Carnet de Bal,* and *Le Quai des Brumes.* But they do prevent the newer films being seen in this country. Fine new Continental productions of '47 and '48 vintage are still queueing up, soon to be jostled by those of '49, all waiting for British screening time.

From France

Best of the new French productions yet to come this side of the Channel are *From Man to Men,* with Jean Louis Barrault, a story of the founding of the Red Cross, scripted by Charles Spaak and directed by Christian Jacque; *Manon,* directed by Clouzot, introducing the pride and hope of the French industry, lovely young Cécile Aubry; *Doctor Laennec,* directed by Maurice Cloche of *Monsieur Vincent* fame; *Such a Pretty Little Beach,* directed by Ives Allegret with Gérard Philipe, now top leading man of France; *La Revoltée,* directed by Marcel L'Herbier, with Josette Day; *Les Parents Terribles,* made by the

On opposite page:—
"Exodus" (Lux Films).



gifted Jean Cocteau, with both Jean Marais and Josette Day as stars; and *Pattes Blanches,* directed by Grémillon from the original script by Anouilh. Each standing for proven talent, these names are familiar to film-goers all over Britain. When, if ever, will this wealth of film art edge its way into our few specialised cinemas?

From Italy

Italian films are, at present, perhaps even more acceptable to the British public, for whom their fresh, robust quality and broader humour have a special appeal. As the Italian industry grows, more brilliant productions than ever pour forth to delight audiences all over the world—except in Britain where there is no room. Amongst recent Italian pictures four are especially outstanding—all made by the big Lux Film company—and British film-goers should demand to see them. Directed by a group of young men, still in their early thirties, they are:—

In the Name of the Law (Pietro Germi): *The Mill on the River Po* (Alberto Lattuada); *Exodus* (Diulio Coletti); and *Bitter Rice* (Giuseppe de Santis). These films share a remarkable common quality; each of them, shot wholly on location in the realistic tradition, has welded dramatic natural backgrounds closely into its story.

Lives of the Peasants

Pietro Germi chose a little-known corner of Sicily for *In the Name of the Law,* a story of the Mafia, set in wide, rugged territory scorched dry and uniform by the pitiless sun. In such unyielding country are moulded the characters of the men who despise all law except their own—the law of violence and revenge. Those who dwell here inherit cruelty like Nature's own. *The Mill on the River Po,* Lattuada's saga, tells of a family of millers—one generation amongst many—who have made their home on the shores of the river. This is a story that rolls by placidly, like the great waterway itself, becoming troubled and turbulent in turn as storms whip up the waters. The lives of the peasants are always at the mercy of the river, their best friend and worst enemy. And the setting of the story is in the period of history when life, having flowed along for centuries with little change, meets sudden social conflicts, the prelude to many of our present-day disorders.

Struggle, Torment, Terrorists

In *Exodus,* Coletti found a strip of deserted coast which symbolised the mood of this story of Jewish immigrants—a story of struggle and bitter feud. Amongst these arid rocks and stunted undergrowth he saw the perfect setting for the drama of clandestine landings, the plotting of the terrorists, and the heroism of the British, hated guardians of that historic age-old land. The theme is not so much the struggle between nations as a study of the many different aspects of love, ranging from selfless patriotism to greed. The tormented landscape either contrasts or merges with the mood.

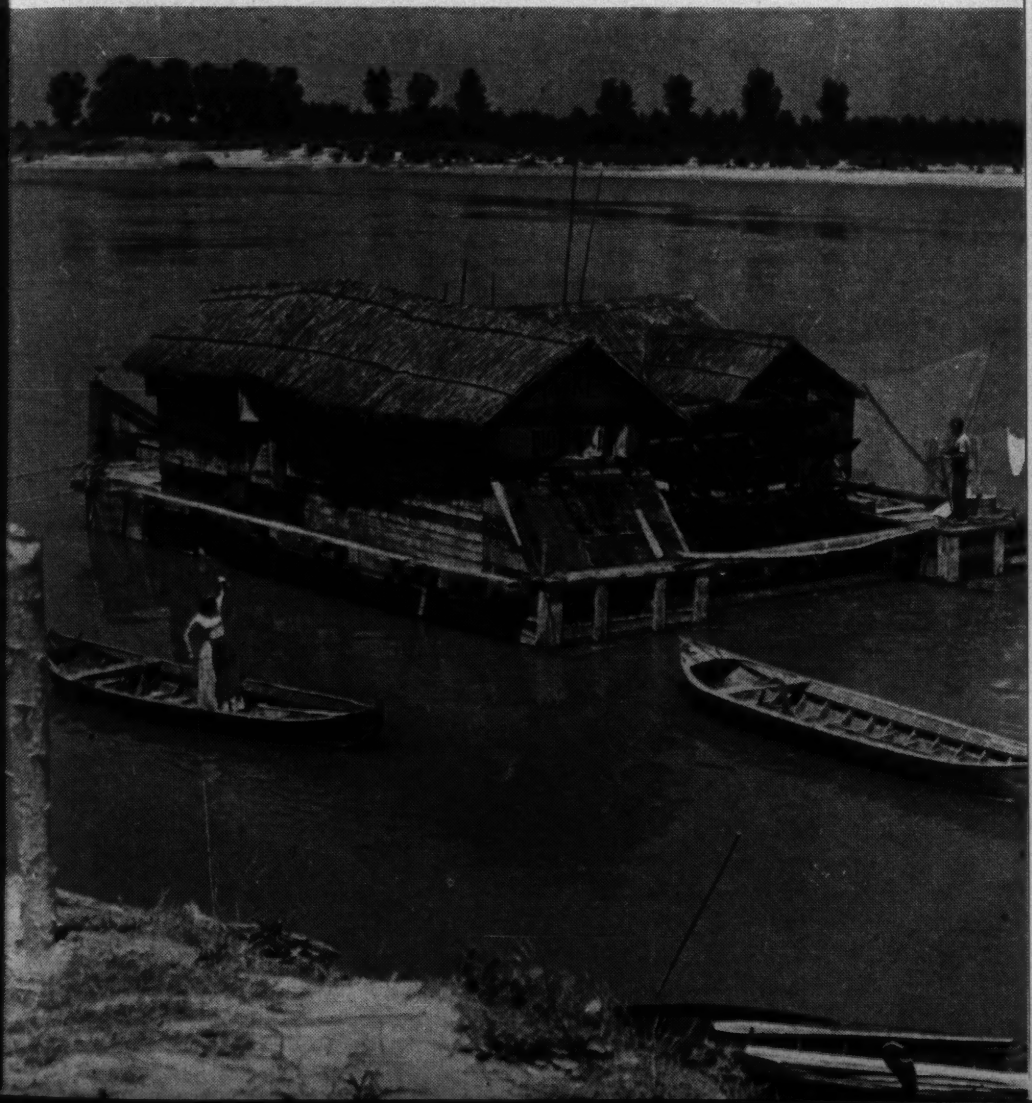
The Rice Workers

Since he had seen the flooded rice fields of the North, de Santis was always determined to make a film of the strange life of the rice workers. The vast stretches of sullen water, only disturbed by hurricanes of rain, inspired a story of man's fight against nature—and how man is beaten in combat with the elements. This compelling film, *Bitter Rice,* is built up around the lives of the

hundreds of workers who flock to the rice fields each year. Life in this torpid region is vigorous and brutal, its hard conditions breed passions which sometimes flare up into tragedy. All these films alike bear the stamp of artistic sincerity; each states human truths; each is stimulating and worth while.

These four films are the sort of films that we should be seeing, yet they are denied to British audiences. Must the reason be sought amongst film-goers themselves? Perhaps appetites are sluggish after the repeated doses of treacly sentiment poured out from Hollywood and Denham. Or does the fault lie with the exhibitors who still fear that fine films are bad box office?

"The Mill on the River Po" (*Lux Films*).



QUESTION FOR PARENTS

by Paul Nugat

If your child were offered a part in a film, would you sign along the dotted line?

THE Home Office has an illustrious committee brooding on the thorny subject of the employment of children as actors in theatres and film studios. For the last six months they have been concerning themselves largely with child employment in theatres and music-halls. When they turn to considerations of their employment in film studios, they will bear in mind the Children and Young Persons Act of 1933, which makes it unlawful for any boy or girl to work in a factory—to wit, a film studio. This Law has been superseded, in part, by the last Education Act, which raised the school-leaving age to sixteen.

Use of Discretion

I do not think anyone will blame studio executives for having adopted the viewpoint that some Acts are made to be winked at. Just think of the string of films in recent times, which, without circumventing the Law, could never have been made: *Hue and Cry, London Town, Great Expectations, Oliver Twist, The Fallen Idol,* as well as such excellent children's fare as *Bush Christmas* and *The Secret Tunnel.* And you can go on adding to the list. But how is it that all these films were made in defiance of the Law, without one prosecution resulting? Well, there must have been connivance. To put it nicely, there are sympathetic folk in the Ministry of Education, the Home Office, and among local educational authorities, who know when to bat an eyelid. They know they can do so, because care will be taken to ensure that, while working at a studio, a child's education and welfare is not neglected. Our producers are very virtuous in providing rest-rooms and playrooms, and teachers and governesses, often far outstripping anything the child has previously known. Apart from any other consideration, it is sound psychology. It lessens the impact of the unfamiliar surroundings. These are disturbing enough on adult artistes; they might well prove disastrous to a youthful mind.

Is Ballyhoo Harmful?

But, how far parents of these child-stars are capable of protecting them from the ballyhoo—inevitably attendant upon a successful screen debut with subsequent exploitation of the child,



BOBBY HENREY.

when officially going about his normal business of growing up—is a subject for speculation in the absence of any serious study of the question. I find it impossible to believe that a child can be protected from an early awareness that he or she is different from other children. If they never read a word of the publicity and praise written about their performances, they must still stumble across an adulterated form of it from their school-friends.

But, in the absence of a psychological survey of the subject, there is nothing in the known records to show that any harmful effects are later evident in adult life. Jackie Coogan never made the grade as an adult actor, but I have never heard that he is a misfit in life. That darling "tear-jerker," Shirley Temple, seems to have made a success of marriage and motherhood—and the odds against that must be a little longer in Hollywood than elsewhere.

I hope I am offering you food for thought—without giving you facts which might decide you to act one way or the other—in case you should ever have the chance to put your own child on the screen. For you never can tell what a film director will be looking for next in a child.

British Child-Stars

John Howard Davies was selected for the part of Oliver in *Oliver Twist,* not for his acting experience, which was zero, but because he had that lean and frail appearance, which, in rags, is associated with under-nourishment.

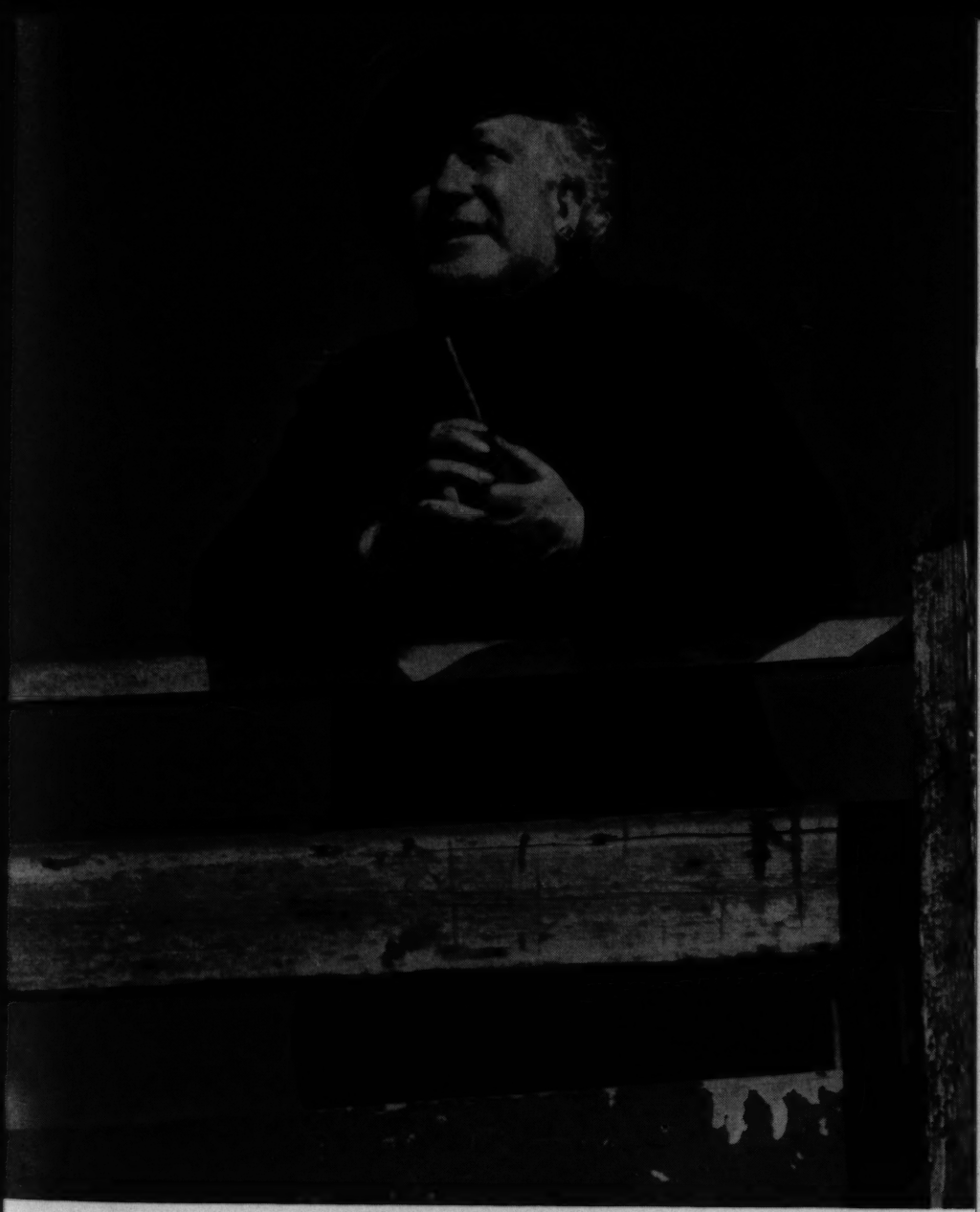
The then eight-year-old Bobby Henrey jumped to fame in *The Fallen Idol,* not through the revelation of any acting ability—any child can act say the film directors—but because, in the flesh, he measured up to Carol Reed's vision of a nicely-bred boy with a hint of a foreign accent.

It would be unfair to some of those children, who are now adolescent successes, to suggest that Dame Fortune is the only element to take a hand in this tricky game.

Self-possession

Petula Clark covered an ominous silence on the radio, at the age of ten, by offering to sing a song to mask a technical hitch. It showed tremendous self-possession—a vital asset in an actress's career. And it led to her debut in films. Watching her performance in her latest film, *Don't Ever Leave Me,* her first adolescent role, I felt that here was a child-discovery destined to reach the heights as an adult. Playing opposite her was Anthony Newley, who has been seen in *Oliver Twist, Vice Versa,* and the Huggett Family series. Although he was already at work in an office at the age of fourteen, he was not resigned to this future. More than any other youngster, he can be said to have created his own opportunities by his own initiative.

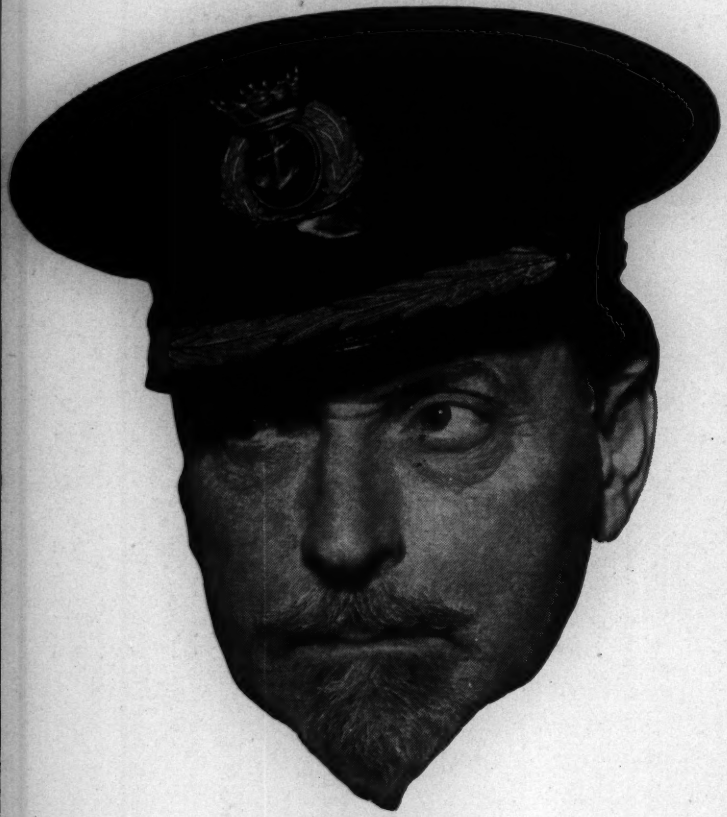
(*Continued on page 27*)



WHISKY GALORE!

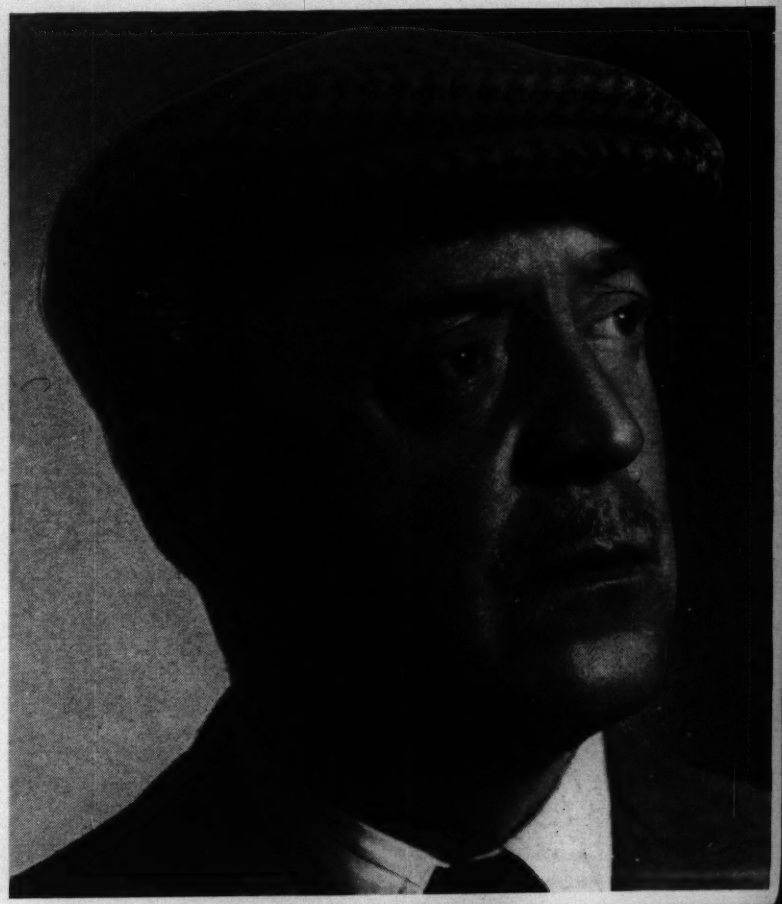
A Michael Balcon Production.
Directed by Alexander Mackendrick.
Screenplay by Compton Mackenzie and Angus MacPhail.

STRICTLY PICTORIAL



Author Compton Mackenzie as he appears in the film.

Basil Radford.

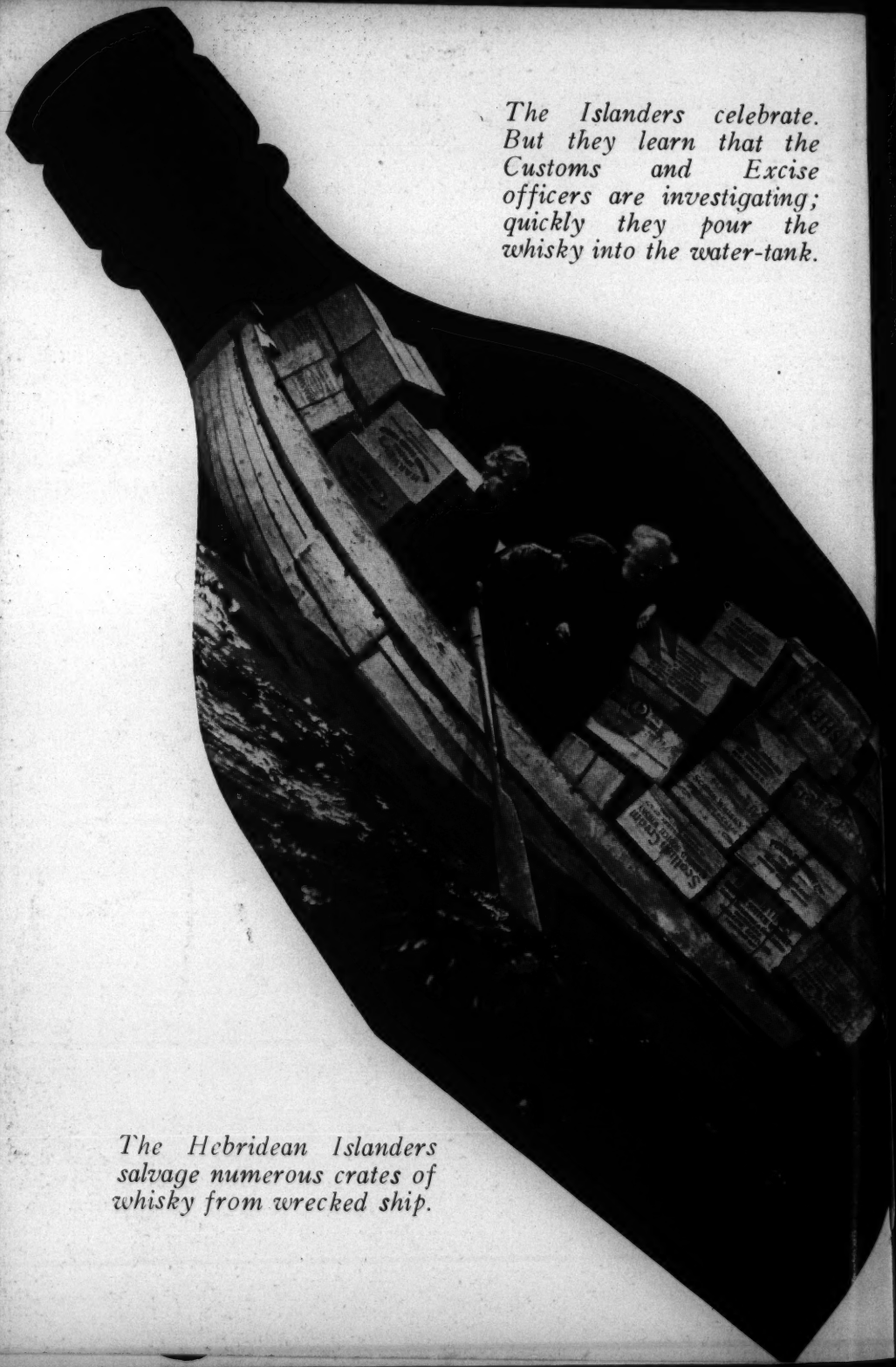




Gordon Jackson.



James Robertson Justice.



The Islanders celebrate. But they learn that the Customs and Excise officers are investigating; quickly they pour the whisky into the water-tank.

The Hebridean Islanders salvage numerous crates of whisky from wrecked ship.





Dennis Price.

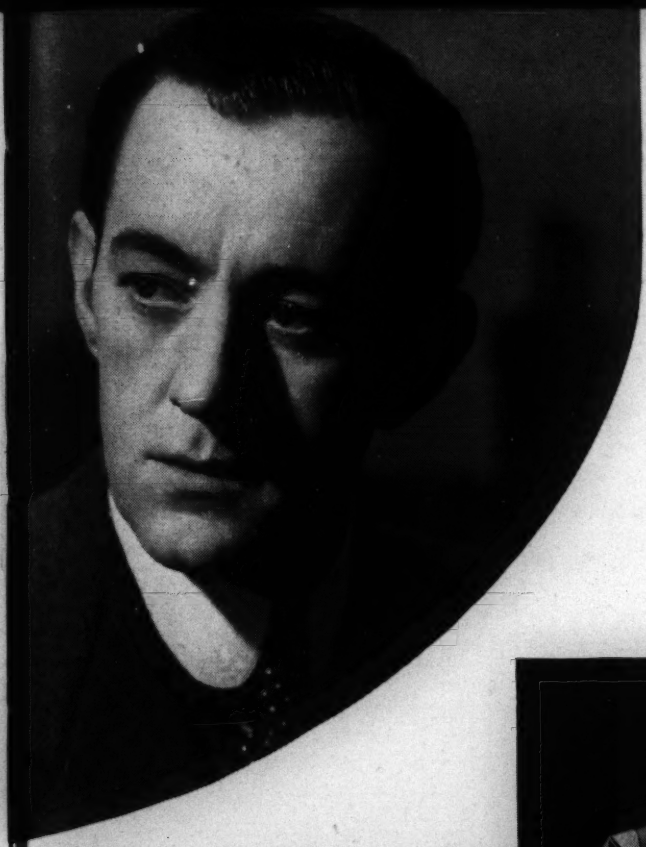
Joan Greenwood.

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

A Michael Balcon Production.

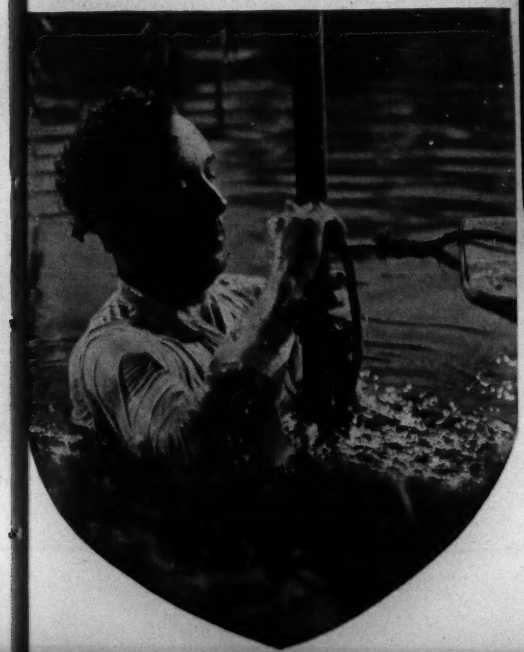
Directed by Robert Hamer.

Screenplay by Robert Hamer and John Dighton.



Alec Guinness plays eight different people in this picture, all of whom are murdered by an aristocrat with an exceptionally strong grievance (Dennis Price).





Victim No. 3 is poisoned —in a most apologetic manner.

Joan Greenwood departs from her usual "nice girl" roles, in order to play the part of a pretty vixen.





Victim No. 4 is killed when the balloon, from which she is dropping leaflets, is pierced by an arrow.

SIR MICHAEL BALCON.





JOHN HOWARD DAVIES.

(*Continued from page* 18)

There Is a Loophole

There are a score more boys and girls whose parents are keeping their fingers crossed, hoping that their children are not going to prove meteors across the celluloid hemisphere. Some are bound to be failures as adults. What will their lives be then? Can they really forget the times when they were fussed over? Will they really be as happy as other citizens, who, as children, never tasted temporary fame?

These questions require serious consideration by any parent faced with a tempting contract. Should the chance come your way, and you decide to sign, there is one loop-hole. Legally, no Court of Law will uphold it.

THE ELEMENT OF TIME

BY J. W. BOOTH

In the cinema, the impossible is achieved. Past, present and future become as one . . . . Time is conquered !

"TIME is the stuff life is made of" . . . such were the words of Benjamin Franklin, two hundred years ago.

To-day, in the twentieth-century medium of the moving pictures, how applicable Franklin's words remain. For the element of time is indeed the basis of the cinema's narrative technique.

In everyday life we are ruled by the dictatorship of Time. As we madly dash to catch our early morning bus, or, as we wait impatiently in the evenings to tune in to our favourite programme, always the seconds tick steadily by. Time marches on relentlessly, refusing to be hurried or to be halted . . . ruthless, unconquerable Time!

Conquering Time

How often have we made the fervent wish that it might be possible to put back the clock . . . to return to the carefree days of childhood . . . to make a fresh start? Or how often have we heard the voice of adolescence, wishing away the green years of life in eager anticipation of maturity?

Such wishes are as vain as the desire, in moments of intense emotional delight, that time should stand still. But, in the realms of the cinema, these wishes are granted . . . the impossible is achieved . . . Time is conquered!

In this new world, real time ceases to exist and the magical dimensions of filmic time are born. Past, present and future become as one. Time itself becomes a telescope, equally capable of being extended or else compressed.

This modern miracle is achieved, firstly, by the process of editing (in its three interdependent stages of scripting, shooting and cutting) and, secondly, by the control of camera speeds, resulting in either fast or slow motion.

Principles of Editing

The conquest of both real time and real space by the principles of editing is a fundamental of film technique.

In real life, for a person to enter a room and cross to sit in a chair by the fireplace, there is a certain fixed distance that must be travelled and a certain fixed period of time it would take to do so.

But, in a film, a character need hardly have entered a room before a smooth cut on action whisks him over to the fireplace. He is next discovered almost in the act of sitting down.

The laws of space have been eliminated. Real time has ended.

A gay scene from the film. On the waters of Lac d'Annecy in France, Ann Todd and Trevor Howard wave, from their motor-boat, to people on board a steamer. Acting the part of the boatman is David Lean, who took over this role as well as directing the scenes for "Passionate Friends."





Ann Todd and Trevor Howard lunch at a London Club. The head waiter, Mr. Williams, on the left, and the wine waiter, who are serving them, were both chosen by David Lean, to play small roles in the "Passionate Friends."

Filmic time now holds sway. In this instance, the difference between the two time-dimensions may be infinitesimal. It becomes overwhelmingly apparent in the extreme case of montage sequences.

Multiple Dissolves

The nineteen-thirties were the golden era for those gentlemen, with unpronounceable names, whom Hollywood specially commissioned to execute the nightmare sequences of quickly-cut shots and multiple dissolves. In a few fleeting seconds of filmic time they could span a war, or else depict the years of gay life . . . with roulette wheels spinning giddily, chips stacking up at perilous angles and champagne bubbles filling the screen.

Such sequences may well be called "long-shots" in terms of time. Their opposite numbers, temporal "close-ups," are also a filmic possibility.

Parallel Cutting

Real time can be extended by the device known as "parallel cutting." This, as its name implies, consists of cross-cutting between two or more separate actions being carried on at the same time. By developing each of these fully—usually for reasons of suspense—it is possible to build up a sequence covering a greater span of time than the concurrent actions could have taken in real life.

In varying degrees and combinations these forms of editing are the everyday technique of the film. The uses of fast and slow motion are less practised, but are capable of more subtle results.

To-day, extreme fast motion is unseen, except for an occasional speeding up of action for purely comic effect. Whilst slow motion, as we know it (although actually achieved by accelerating the camera speed), is confined almost exclusively to news-reel coverage of sporting events.

Controlled Camera Speeds

As an example of the amazing power capable of being wielded by controlling camera speeds, mention should be made of such films as the *Secrets of Nature* series, dealing with plant growth. Here, by retarding the rate of exposure to only one frame per hour, it is possible to obtain a resultant action on the screen at 90,000 times the speed at which it really happened.

Apart from such trick effects, slow motion has been little used. Fairbanks, Snr., took advantage of it to give added grace to his bounds and leaps, and many films have used it to give an air of unreality to dream sequences.

Recently considerable use of accelerated photography was made in the French film, *Farrebique*. The passage of time is marked by shadows moving over the hills and the farmyard. The coming of spring is heralded by the flowers magically springing into life.

But for the truly creative uses of fast and slow motions in their most intricate and subtle forms it is necessary to turn, if possible, to the theories—both written and practised—of that great Russian director, Ivor Pudovkin. Only then can the tremendous power in the hands of the directors of to-morrow be appreciated.

Perhaps the greatest asset, which the cinema confers upon itself by its creation of its own filmic time, is the ability so given to screenwriter and director to move about at will within the orb of Time.

Abuse of Flashback

At present, the flashback technique is finding disfavour. So, for that matter, did sordid screen stories some months ago,

and musicals and crazy comedies at one time or another. The simple truth is that the flashback has been overworked.

Often a flashback has been used as an easy way out of a difficulty . . . as a narrative device . . . an aid to exposition. More often, back treatment is not only justifiable, but also inherent in the original conception of the theme or story.

Lean's Passionate Interest

If proof is needed that a new freedom to rove at will in Time



Ann Todd and David Lean pause to welcome J. Arthur Rank on the set of "The Passionate Friends."

perhaps, one (or a series of them) has been used in an attempt to give a "New Look" to an old story. And sometimes it seems that flashbacks are used out of sheer perversity.

Unfortunately, all this indiscriminate use has a damaging effect upon the film in which flash-

is upon the cinematic horizon, then the present pre-occupation of David Lean with such problems should well suffice. *Oliver Twist* and *The Passionate Friends* both contained examples of Lean's striving, not perhaps to perfect an entirely new technique, but certainly to render the conventional one far more flexible.



Robert Newton and Alec Guinness in "Oliver Twist."

Certain it is that the future of the film does not lay in such experiments as *Lady in the Lake,* or Hitchcock's *Rope.* Both were interesting, but so may be the entrance to a cul-de-sac! By their elimination of cutting, each sounded its own death-knell before it was alive.

Contrasting tempo is a pre-requisite for holding the interest and attention of an audience. Tempo in the cinema depends largely upon the creation of filmic time. Filmic time cannot be created without giving full rein to the processes of editing.

More Imagination Needed

Undoubtedly the future lies in giving added plasticity to the element of time; not only in the creation of filmic time by subtler editing and use of varying camera speeds, but in a wider and more imaginative treatment of the entire conception of Time.

The Halfway House gave a lead in this latter respect; a lead which could profitably be followed up on the lines J. B. Priestley took in such plays as "Dangerous Corner," "I Have Been Here Before" and "Time and the Conways."

Let all film makers, in doubt as to the path of progress that the film should take, recall the words of Pudovkin . . . "the film assembles the elements of reality to build from them a new reality proper to itself, and the laws of space and time that, in the sets and footage of the stage are fixed and fast, are in the film entirely altered."

A Dictionary of FILM CLICHES (A-E)

by ERIC GOLDSCHMIDT

Eric Goldschmidt is a young Australian who has spent much time in Hollywood. He has cliches in his blood. His Dictionary, he tells us, will be incorporated in his thesis, "The Sociological, Ethical and Anthropological Foundations of the Film Cliche"

A for Average

ACCORDING to statistics I am 22½, of uncertain sex, gullible, dense, vain and tired. 9 per cent. of me is in the higher-income bracket. 16 per cent. of me goes to the movies twice a week. I have no memory for names. I wouldn't be sure whether Clara Bow is dead and whether J. Arthur Rank plays butler parts in American films. It is certain that films are habit-forming with me and several ponderous sociologists are perturbed that my son, through his Saturday-morning sessions, will form the habit before he's reached voting age.

Now let me tell you something. I'm 54, beetle-browed and irascible. I know the Odes of Horace by heart. In Latin and in English. My sex is dead certain and several witnesses in Blackpool will testify to that. I haven't any income at all. Does that disturb the film statisticians? If I point out these facts to them, they glare at ciphers on their wall-map and quote attendance figures for 1935.

They will not budge, and therefor films will continue to be made for the average man, stroke woman. Therefore you and me and Uncle Tom Cobleigh will continue to be 22½, gullible and of uncertain sex, from now until the age of the atomic tricycle.

B for the British Way of Life

Peering through his periscope, Noel Coward happened on the Soul of the Anglo-Saxon People, briefly known as SAP. At the time it stood rigidly firm with its back to the wall, on a sticky wicket. Later it crumbled under the lure of Easy Money in Temptation Harbour. "It's hard to be good," sighed the Sap when, in a Blanche Fury the idol fell. Coward's Sap seemed in danger of joining a sorry band of dead lovers when, triumphantly, Uncle Silas came to hug it. And things haven't been the same since.

We have now a split personality. One of us belongs to a nation of shopkeepers. The other is a slow-

witted, rumbling aristocrat with a condescending monocle who leaves his foggy country seat every so often to repair to the House of Lords where he changes the course of history. Having done that Lord Sap plays an absent-minded round of golf (clean play), fires his butler (stout work), begets an American daughter (well done) and passes out quietly in the library (foul play).

Poor Sap! His was the glory . . . in war time. Right now he's relegated to a small back-room. His passionate friend has cautioned him to beware of pity. That's fine. Though, until he does, Britannia Mews.

C for College Capers

This is rich, boys. There's a rumpus on the campus and Lulu Epsilon is the ring-leader. She's also the swing-leader.

On the other side is Professor Triplicate, a long-haired old fogey who thinks a rug-cutter is a Persian salesman.

Now it's speech-day. Facing the camera from left to right is Senator Beaglebohm from Washington, Lulu Epsilon, her father, Notestuffer P. Epsilon, fiancés, weeping mothers and Triplicate. After a lot of clapping and yoohoodling Lulu leads the boys straight into "Shoot a Nickel to the Fickle"—six choruses and close harmony which comes to you by courtesy of Close Harmony, Inc.

Up in his attic Triplicate doubles up in chagrin. What? Fling having its youth? My college . . . my alumnus . . . my fraternity . . . my God! In agony the professor reaches for the telephone. "Long distance," he whispers hoarsely as the scene fades. He's plotting something, the old rascal.

A year later: speech-day again. Senator Beaglebohm sits down with a round of applause. Lulu rallies the boys. They break into a chorus of "Down Monotony Lane" while female limbs in laborious Technicolor animate the scene. Tripping up the stairway we see the broody, badly-lit face of Triplicate. He goes up and up and up—on the roof-garden he unlocks a secret cupboard crammed with old masters.

"Hot in there," says Ludwig van Beethoven stepping into fresh air. Similar remarks are made by his cronies, Vaughan Williams, Peter Tchaikovsky, Carol Gibbons, Arturo Toscanini and Yehudi Menuhin disguised as Stewart Granger. They troop into the Grand Hall: pandemonium! Deadlock. Two opposing factions. The trombones stare menacingly, Ludwig pulls a face. Lulu yells: "Hyia, drip," to which Triplicate replies sedately: "Sixteen semi-quavers to the bar." With these fierce slogans, Swing versus Classics gives battle.

Half an hour later it's all fixed up, of course. Lulu and Triplicate are going to be married. Ludwig and the Senator are best men. And Tchaikovsky, who has given them his long hair for a wedding present, can be seen cutting up the red carpet hysterically. "I want to see the floor show," he dithers.

D for Discovery

Scientific discovery requires a mealy-mouthed, soft-spoken, ever-so-persistent hero. For choice, Spencer Tracy, Don Ameche, Paul Muni, or Walter Pidgeon. These

boys pursue Truth with a capital "T." However, their wives won't let them—they bring cups of tea. Nor will their bankers let them—they bring overdrafts. Things get tough for Spencer (Paul, Don or Walter). He stretches his worn-out equipment and leisure time to unbearable lengths. He cowers grimly in the basement, steeling himself against the dead-weight of public opinion. His stomach, his eyebrows and his cat growl at all comers. This scene is repeated until something really Big crops up:—a war, or an amputation, or something.

In the clattering excitement a small-part player remembers Walter (or Spencer, Paul, Don). He's yanked out of his murky surroundings, instantly quells the trouble and having done these things, prosperity ensues. Some French president kisses the famous and the not-so-good side of the celebrated face. Don (or Paul) is overcome. So is his wife. And his banker.

One hitch though: Paul (etc.) still has this fad about his basement. Let's give him a bit of a reward then, says the president. The cranky experiment shall be demonstrated in public. Will it work? Won't it work? Will it . . . won't it?

Wife and banker sit in the anteroom plucking rose leaves when, suddenly, a deafening crash assures them that the experiment is over. A meek palooka with a bowler hat thereupon offers our hero the now vacant presidency of the French Republic.

E for the End

You've paid 1s. 9d. for three hours' entertainment. And after the film has been on the screen for eight minutes you see boy turning to girl sharply. "This is the end," boy says. "Is this really the end?" girl queries. Boy nods his head. You get restive. The word "refund" shoots up in your mind, when boy clinches it, saying: "I just can't go through with this. Goodbye forever." Girl doesn't say anything now. She, too, has been paid for the whole of the film. Her dilemma and yours are identical.

There's no need to be alarmed. Some poor hack of a scriptwriter dreamed it all up. Deciding that a good, strong climax should arise at this juncture he tried to connect two completely disjointed episodes B, C and A, D (before climax, after dilemma). Since one cannot have three dots on the screen or "more next week" the scriptwriter tries the element of surprise, the lurk about "the end."

He has a double advantage there. If you've liked the story so far, you'll be glad it goes on. If you haven't like it, the "end" announcement raises high hopes of something brand new and unsullied. Either way is the best. And the man who shouts loudly from the stalls, "I wish it *were* the end," gets ejected by the management.

Solution to Film Crossword No. 18, June, 1949

Clues Across and Down.—1 Across, Melachrino. 1 Down, Monte Carlo. 2, Logie. 3, Culver. 4, Rope. 5, Nolan. 6, Stolen Life. 7, Nigel. 8, Pilot. 9, Eleven. 10, Anil. 11, Lovell. 12, Arch. 13, Carne. 14, London. 15, Dover. 16, Dole. 17, Largo. 18, Envoi. 19, Peter Lorre.

Report on the Third Annual Film School of the

NATIONAL FILM ASSOCIATION

From Our Own Correspondent

THE seventy winners of scholarships to the Third Annual Film School of the National Film Association, which was held at the Beatrice Webb House, Dorking, no doubt considered themselves very lucky. For a whole week, amidst ideal surroundings, they steeped themselves in almost every aspect of the use of the film.

Prominent Personalities

They heard lectures on a wide range of subjects, varying from practical projection to the future of documentary films, and the speakers included such well-known names as Brian Desmond Hurst, John Grierson, Herbert Hughes, M.P., and Joseph Reeves, M.P.

In the evenings, they were offered a wide choice of film classics, including many famous documentaries, which were shown in the two cinemas, and during the daytime they also had the opportunity to examine and experiment with a variety of cameras and projectors supplied by the C.W.S. Film Unit.

At the opening session, the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson, M.P., President of the Board of Trade, spoke at some length on the future of the British film industry. He took an optimistic view right from the start, declaring that a country such as ours cannot afford to be without a medium of expressing, not only to our own people, but to the world, a pictorial, dramatic and popular representation of our way of life.

The Crisis

Passing on to the film crisis, Mr. Wilson said that the Government, in making working capital available to industry through the Film Finance Corporation, had embarked upon a policy entirely without precedent; but this could not be done in time to prevent a serious slump in production during the early months of this year.

He maintained, however, that in the U.S.A., Canada and other countries, there is still a growing demand for British films. Recently, when he was in Canada, the Ontario Film Board had reported on the high quality of our films, and a market survey showed that a third of cinema-goers, a growing proportion, had expressed their preference for British films.

"Prestige" Pictures Important

In these circumstances, he felt it very necessary that the Film Finance Corporation should make possible the production of a number of "prestige" pictures in addition to the "bread-and-butter" efforts for the home markets; and any budget austerity must not be allowed to drive first-class creative artistes and technicians into other forms of entertainment.

There were signs that the Government measures were already showing results. Five more feature productions were in progress, compared to three months ago, and another seventeen were almost ready to start. Numbers employed in the studios had increased by over 500 since the end of March.

"I feel it would be wrong for the Government to influence the making of any particular film," concluded Mr. Wilson, "but we have the right to expect free access and a fair showing for British films on the screens of the world." C.H.



by Alan Curl

Hounding Out Talent

ODDEST by-product of the Anglo-American film tussle is the arrival of Hollywood refugees in British studios. By investigating pink ants in a congressional committee, movie moguls have prompted some of their most valuable talent to take a trip abroad. This year's batch tripping to Europe on grounds of political ill-health includes John Huston (director of *Sierra Madre* and *Key Largo*), Edward G. Robinson, script-writer Adrian Scott and director Eddie Dmytryk. Even Danny Kaye was seen on the left-hand side of the un-American Activities Committee.

Hollywood's loss is our gain. On the floor at Denham there is a replica of sky-scrapers and Brooklyn back streets for the shooting of **Give Us This Day.** Americans involved in this film are "ace" director Eddie Dmytryk, producer Rod Geiger, actor Sam Wannamaker (Ingrid Bergman's co-star on Broadway), and script-writer Ben Barzman. Britain's receptive attitude will pay dividends. Audiences the world over will crane their necks to see a competently-made minority report on the American way of life.

The American Depression

Give Us This Day is the story of an Italian bricklayer in New York. Instead of basking in the well-known glories of the American 'twenties, the bricklayer runs up against the gloom, slump and depression of those years.

But for an American inquisition, an Italian Finance Minister, and a tenacious producer, this film would never be made. But for a sharp director, an enthusiastic publicist, and a cancelled contract, it wouldn't have been made in the way you'll see it.

Praise for British Tolerance

"Third time lucky," says producer Rod Geiger when explaining why this American subject with American key-technicians and actors is made under a British

imprint. (i) Originally it should have been made in Hollywood. When the Un-American Activities Committee black-listed director Edward Dmytryk, Geiger packed up and tried to secure studios in Rome. Previously he had produced *Paisa* and *Open City* there. (ii) A year later he was all set to start again. Cast, technicians and finance were mobilised when suddenly the Italian Government passed a new set of currency laws. No dollars into Italy, no film out of Italy. All preparations had been in vain. (iii) To people who associate British films with crises and intolerance, Geiger's verdict may sound like a paradox. He praises our liberal attitude and stability, the very elements he tried to find all over the world in order to make this picture.

Fun at "The Players"

Straight actor O'Casey was making whooppee one night at the Players' Theatre, Charing Cross. But for this he would still be just one of the dismal fringe of undiscovered actors. In the theatre was Dmytryk, who needed somebody to warble a Neapolitan folksong. Tall, mop-headed, Canadian-born Rhonan O'Casey had never appeared in a film before. Nor had he ever sung in public. Under Dmytryk's direction he did both. And *Give Us This Day* gave O'Casey his break.

A Dmytryk Fan

"My bags were packed, I bought a lightweight suit, an Arabic dictionary, a portable telephone and a fly-swish. I was all set to go on a location film to Africa." Saying this, publicity director John Ware looked round the most nondescript of all the offices in Denham. Undoubtedly he was securely rooted in the temperate zone now.

"And why didn't you go to Africa?" I asked.

"One afternoon a fellow-publicist asked me to do him a favour: would I go to the airport, collect a party of incoming Americans and see them to their hotel rooms. One of the Americans was Eddie Dmytryk. Instead of shaking hands politely and remarking on his journey, Eddie plunged into films before his bags had been unloaded. And that," concludes John Ware, "was that."

Even after 15 years in films, John was electrified by Dmytryk's brilliance. They teamed up. And unless Dmytryk happens to go that way it seems unlikely that John Ware will ever see Africa, let alone squat in a desert there.

Breaking New Ground

Greatest vice in British films, according to Charles Goldner, is type-casting. Charles played "heavies" most of his life and you may remember his bulky, sinister frame lurking in many a movie. Two years ago, in *One Night With You*, producers seized on Charles' comic talents. From then on he played "heavies"—comics, "heavies"—comics . . . and this would have continued endlessly, but for:

Aldo Fabrizi, Italian star, cancelling a contract,
Dmytryk's casting sense,
Charles' buoyant eagerness to break new ground.

Now he has played his first real character-part in films, that of a fatherly old bricklayer. Thereby the vicious circle of type-casting is broken. Thereby Charles Goldner's career is taking a completely new turn.

Birt and Brown Paper

Sub-title of **The Cord** is "The story of a young married couple whose lives would be wrecked but for a second chance." But for

brown paper, a beadle, a Welsh accent, and a drought, there wouldn't have been any married couple, second chance, or anything else.

Twenty-four years ago, director Dan Birt tried to sell goods-and-passenger lifts, as frightening a commodity as any salesman ever handled. In his spare time and during week-ends he wrote to the half-dozen film companies then in existence, pestering them for a job. Neatness and method netted rejections every time. One day, running out of stationery, Birt penned his application on brown packing paper. Next week he started as camera assistant.

Christine and the Beadle

According to production manager Leigh Aman, the quaintest spot in London is Ely Place, near the Holborn Viaduct. Aman discovered it when taking G.I.s on a conducted tour. Apart from being the legal property of Cambridgeshire, guarded by a beadle in colourful uniform, Ely Place contains a magnificent pub. All these attractions determined Aman and producer Havelock-Allan to shoot some night scenes there. It was a secluded spot in a business district: there should be no trouble from curious passers-by. The weather forecast was favourable, equipment lined up, costumes weren't needed. The whole thing should be over in a jiffy.

As the unit assembled, trouble came from an unexpected source. "Can't do that there 'ere," trumpeted the beadle, "leastwise not without permission from Cambridgeshire." While the unit was deliberating whether to send a runner or smoke signals to Cambridge, Christine Norden came to the rescue. She talked to the beadle, coaxed him, and finally promised him a kiss if he'd shut both eyes in the face of the arc lamps. Quite apart from saving the company a thousand pounds, that kiss enabled Dan Birt to get the authenticity he needed.

Gwyneth and the Accent

A Welsh accent is an insuperable obstacle to a rising young actress, as Gwyneth Vaughan found out. Discovered by director Jill Craigie and trans-shipped to London, Gwyneth's dialect was rejected by all the metropolitan casting agents. "Elocution lessons," they advised. "Return to Wales," they suggested. But Gwyneth has a tough streak in her make-up box. She stuck it out, eventually getting a part in *The Cord*. Now the laugh is on her. Playing a love-struck bobby-soxer, Gwyneth is forbidden to make any articulate sounds at all. But she's sure that this, her second part in films, will lead to something bigger, and not back to Cardiff.

Subject—"The Cord"

The ballad of Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Sheen might well be rewritten into something befitting Mr. Garret and Mr. Pertwee. They live in the same block in Kensington. On Sunday afternoons they play tennis or drive out together. During the week Mr. Garret sits on the board of directors of Valiant Films. Mr. Pertwee writes scripts. Being personal friends, they don't talk "shop" over their drinks.

The violation of this rule caused *The Cord* to be made. Mr. Garret enquired whether Mr. Pertwee had any petrol Mr. Pertwee stated that fluids of any kind were lacking in his house. Mr. Garret expressed astonishment and surmised that Mr. Pertwee must have had a stiff night. Mr. Pertwee disliked being mocked. On further provocation, he showed Mr. Garret an original screenplay he had just completed.

You guessed it—*The Cord*.

DIGGING UP THE PAST

by RACHAEL WHEAR

The British Film Academy Librarian gives us a glimpse into the early days of film making

WHAT is it that makes early *Kine Weeklies* and *Bioscopes* such stimulating reading in comparison with the Trade Press of to-day? It may be only the affectionate prejudice which a historian acquires for his material, yet the personalities in the industry at the beginning of this century are hard to beat for colour. Will Barker for instance, founder of the first Ealing Studios, retired from the industry thirty years ago, but is still so vital that it is difficult to imagine him more vigorous than he is to-day at eighty-three, and enthusiasts like George Pearson are almost as much ahead of their time now as they were thirty-five years ago.

The March of Time and . . .

Showmanship, of course, appears to be the result of temperament rather than training, and the achievements of pioneer exhibitors are stressed so emphatically that the business of making the films, as distinct from showing them, would sometimes seem to have been of little account. But in most cases the Trade Press gave such clear pictures of dear old so-and-so (in trouble with the law again); or that nice chap with the big moustache, over at the Bush; or the reliable and charming Mr. Hepworth; or even the "phoney," somewhere else, that interviews with their modern selves can prove embarrassing to one who lives in both worlds.

It is perhaps as a result of living too much in the past that this historian is often quite confused to find that the present subjects of her interviews have grown older since their smooth faces beamed (or glared) over stiff-and-shiny collars from the pages of the *Bioscope*. On the other hand, still-active members of the industry are liable to be equally disconcerted, or even insulted, to find themselves called upon as "material" for a "history"!

. . .the Same Old Story

The yesterday of films is indeed only a short time ago; and, in many ways, yesterday and to-day are sadly alike. True, there are differences. During the first World War renters seemed to be an oppressed minority, and £4,000 was considered a fair sum for the production of a feature. The

(*Continued on page* 42)

FILM PRODUCTION IN CHINA

BY T. Y. LO

China has been at war for over thirty years - yet film production has continued to increase. This article is a remarkable testimony to the power of the film

BECAUSE of invasions from outside, and internal conflicts, China has been at war for a longer time than any other country (thirty years), yet the Chinese film industry has not stopped growing. The Chinese people have a traditionally accepted form of public entertainment, a form of drama for presentation in a theatre. Even as early as 100 B.C. the "Lantern Shadow" (or Shadow Play) was already in existence. The Chinese classical stage play, which uses only a bare stage and the technique of mime in acting, suffers from no limitations of time, place or background in telling its story. Its kind of imaginative continuity has, in theory, influenced Chinese film makers in their approach to the more mechanically complex art of film production.

"Electric Shadow"

The "Electric Shadow," as we call motion pictures in Chinese, is, of course, a Western invention. It was introduced to China in 1909, but real progress in film production did not come until 1931, when sound was introduced. From 1931 to 1936 was the golden time for China. The country was united in its desire for freedom; there was not only a rapid growth in the film industry, but in other industries as well. Japan was impatient to attack this united China, since she had already occupied Manchuria in 1931. She invaded China with powerful forces on 7th July, 1937. All the progressive programmes became the victims of war, and the film industry was no exception.

It was a bitter war. With what equipment we could take, we followed the biggest migration in Chinese history into the interior and we established our "Underground Film Industry" in Chungking, where it stayed for seven years. I still remember the wonderful fog in winter in Chungking, like the one I saw last year when in London; wonderful, that is, for the prevention of air raids, and the good rock of the mountain city of Chungking, where we processed films and did other work underground in summer. During the war time, all the film workers, including stars and prop. hands from the coastal cities, gave their services voluntarily in producing war propaganda films, both as supporting features and documentaries. They fought like soldiers, but with ammunition supplied from abroad.

Lack of Opportunity

(*Continued from page* 40)

The Chinese film industry has never had a fair chance to produce its own equipment and raw stock. It is always possible as far as production equipment is concerned to buy abroad in the first place. The problem lies in the increasing consumption of raw stock and the demand for new theatre equipment; here the industry is at present helpless. Great sacrifices in production costs have had to be made in order to buy raw stock abroad.

Entirely through the co-operative spirit of the film workers, we managed to make about fifty feature films last year (it was 150 in 1936). Though films like *On the Sungri River, Under Shanghai Roofs* and *Tears of the Yangtse* were all good at the box office and broke records in attendance, the inflationary millions and billions of dollar notes have overthrown our financial prosperity. The war and inflation have spoilt everything.

Towards a Better World

It continues to be a long struggle for China. There is bitterness in the film, *On the Sungri River.* It shows what is actually happening to the Chinese people, and so does the tragi-comedy of inflation and overcrowding in our film, *Under Shanghai Roofs.* The Chinese film makers are looking forward to a day when we can all consider the film not so much as a product in a commercial sense, but as a channel to let the peoples of the world see each other fairly. All the film makers in the world should co-operate closely in promoting international understanding for a better world.—*By courtesy of the British Film Academy.*

main lines of the industry, however, were set and studios already flourished at Shepherd's Bush, Elstree, Walton and Worton Hall as well as at Ealing. The protection of the British film by means of a Quota was being discussed before the end of the war; critics were complaining that there were too many adaptations from the stage; the makers of factual films were a dogged band shunned by the exhibitor; and there were occasional little scraps with the censors (well, perhaps not so little in those days). Import duty, entertainments tax, and the American film were each in turn accused of ruining the British film industry.

Cheerful Optimism

The similarity might be depressing were it not for the cheerful optimism which one failure after another had been unable to suppress in British film makers. When the "History of the British Film" was begun in 1945 it was possible to feel that this persistence, hitherto unreasonable but inspiring, had been justified at last, and that the great day had arrived which had been just about to dawn for at least forty years. To-day no one is sure how long it will last, and meanwhile the comfort of years, the habit of thinking that the Golden Age will begin to-morrow, has been lost. The historian has the advantage here, in being able to escape from such reflections to that happy world in which a brilliant future still seems to await the British silent film.

FILM REVIEWS

THEY LIVE BY NIGHT and THE WINDOW

(Academy)

In bringing these two Doré Schary experimental productions to the notice of the public, the Academy Cinema once again earns the gratitude of film enthusiasts.

Directed by Nicholas Ray, and with a screenplay by Charles Schnee, *They Live by Night* tells the story of two pitiful young lovers in their vain attempt to snatch a little happiness from this cruel world of ours. Tragedy, pathos, and poetry—all are here in this poignant picture.

The performances of Farley Granger, as the boy, and Cathy O'Donnell, the girl, are among the most sincere ever to be filmed. And Howard da Silva once again shows us what a superb actor he is.

In *The Window,* a little boy sees a man commit a murder. But there is no one who will believe him—not even his own parents; he has always been a highly imaginative child with a flair for telling fanciful tales. As the story unfolds, the murderer and his wife try to kill him, and the suspense is almost unbearable.

Bobby Driscoll, the little boy, acts with almost uncanny conviction; and the rest of the cast are exceptionally good. The direction, by Ted Tetzlaff, is quite brilliant, and so is the screenplay by Mel Dinelli.

I'm afraid we shall have to wait a very long time before we again see two such excellent films in the same programme.

LES PAYSANS NOIRS

(Curzon)

Made in French North-West Africa, this is a semi-documentary about a young administrator who frees the ordinary natives from the tyrannical domination of the tribal chiefs.

Louis Arbessier lends a quiet force to the role of administrator; and all the native actors are wonderfully refreshing.

Well worth seeing.

DAYBREAK IN UDI

Produced by the Crown Film Unit, for the Central Office of Information, and sponsored by the Colonial Office, this is the first film report on the British Government's progress in its Colonial policy of helping primitive peoples to raise their standards of community life and to obtain the benefits of civilisation.

Mr. E. R. Chadwick, O.B.E., plays his real-life role—District Officer in Nigeria.

A highly commendable film.

Printed by Thomasons Ltd., Cedar Press, Hounslow, and Published by the Proprietors, Precinct Publications, 50, Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7, to whom all communications should be addressed

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